

NEW PORTRAITS

NOVEMBER 7 – DECEMBER 12

**DOWNTOWN BRANCH
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART**

Traditional portrait painting suffered because of the rise of commercial photography. The still camera offered polite and fashionable images of human subjects at small cost, and early in this century most painters and sculptors abandoned the meticulous craft of portraiture entirely.

Abstract art has been at the center of attention for much of the last forty years. In the late 1950's and 1960's, however, a number of American artists began to concentrate on representational subject matter. Portraiture has been a phase of their studies.

A human face involves much of what we consider to be expressive of an individual; it is charged with the potential of displaying the peculiar indices of a human personality. Examining the relationship between external appearances and emotional or psychological realities is part of the achievement of artists in this exhibition. A face may also be studied wholly for the qualities of its surface, without intentional reference to the intelligence behind it. Some contemporary artists paint an individual much as they would paint an apple or a prune.

Alfred Leslie and Philip Pearlstein seem to regard their subjects with detached, objective points of view. They emphasize physical features mercilessly. Wrinkles look like valleys. A large belly is not glossed over or modified. Some of the artists, such as Chuck Close and Andy Warhol, do not paint from the model, but base their work on photographic images. They are interested in the way a human face looks in a photograph or a silkscreen, rather than its appearance in life.

Several artists aim for a precise reproduction of the characteristics of light, color, and contour in a human face or figure. Often a deliberate likeness is denied to permit varied experimentation with arrangements of space, color, and other elements of composition. In portraits by Alex Katz, an individual's features are reduced to broad, flat areas of color. In works by Andy Warhol, skin, may be painted bright orange in order to balance or enliven a composition. In other works unorthodox angles of view may distort spatial dimensions.

Most of the painters in the exhibition choose to operate at very close range. Faces or entire bodies fill the canvas, and illusions of surrounding space are limited or eliminated entirely. The absence of a central point of focus makes each part of the composition appear equally important. A face may be no more vital to our perception of the work than the folds in a jacket.

These portraits generally represent public idols or the artist's friends and family. He is not obliged to produce flattering or endearing pictures.

CATALOGUE

WMAA denotes works
from the permanent
collection of the
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Measurements are in inches.
Height precedes width precedes depth.

CHUCK CLOSE

PHIL 1969

Synthetic polymer on canvas 108 x 84
WMAA; Gift of Mrs. Robert M. Benjamin

LESLIE 1973

Watercolor on paper 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 57
Collection of Edmund Pillsbury

LESLIE 1973

Watercolor on paper 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 24 1/8
Courtesy of Parasol Press

PHIL 1973

Watercolor on paper 23 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$
WMAA; Gift of Lily Auchincloss in honor of
John I. H. Baur

RED GROOMS

GEORGE KUCHAR 1970

Painted wood 80 x 40 x 40
Collection of Robert Abrams

PROVINCETOWN BICYCLE —

ARTHUR COHEN 1971
Cray-pas on paper in cradled wooden frame 56 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 49
Collection of Arthur Goldberg

GRETCHEN 1973

Paper, hot glue, and watercolor 21 x 20 x 12 $\frac{1}{4}$
Lent by the artist

SASKIA 1973

Paper, hot glue, and watercolor 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{4}$
Lent by the artist

ALEX KATZ

ELI 1963

Oil on canvas 72 x 86
WMAA; Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Fishbach

VINCENT AND SUNNY 1967

Oil on canvas 71 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 47 $\frac{1}{2}$
Courtesy of Marlborough Gallery

JOHN AND DIDI 1968

Oil on aluminum 68 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 48 x 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Courtesy of Marlborough Gallery

EVENING 1972

Oil on canvas 72 x 96
Collection of Mr. and Mrs. John Lawrence

STANLEY 1973

Oil on canvas 48 x 34
Lent by the artist

ALFRED LESLIE

ALFRED LESLIE 1966-67

Oil on canvas 108 x 72
WMAA; Gift of the Friends of the Whitney Museum
of American Art

MARISOL

PORTRAIT OF SIDNEY JANIS SELLING
PORTRAIT OF SIDNEY JANIS BY MARISOL,
BY MARISOL 1967-68

Painted wood construction with plaster, bow tie,
carpet, eyeglass rims 69 x 61 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 21 5/8
Courtesy of The Museum of Modern Art, New York
The Sidney and Harriet Janis Collection, 1967

ALICE NEEL

RED GROOMS AND MIMI GROSS 1967

Oil on canvas 60 x 50
Courtesy of Graham Gallery

ANDY WARHOL 1970

Oil on canvas 60 x 40
WMAA; Promised gift of Timothy Collins

GERALD MALANGA 1970

Oil on canvas 60 x 40
Courtesy of Graham Gallery

JACKIE CURTIS AND RITA RED 1970

Oil on canvas 42 x 60
Courtesy of Graham Gallery

PHILIP PEARLSTEIN

AL HELD AND SYLVIA STONE 1968

Oil on canvas 66 x 72
Collection of Dr. and Mrs. M. Stone

JOHN PERREAULT 1973

Oil on canvas 24 x 30
Courtesy of Allan Frumkin Gallery

NORMAN LOFTIS 1973

Oil on canvas 24 x 16
Lent by the artist

JULIA 1974

Oil on canvas 60 x 48
Lent by the artist

GEORGE SEGAL

RENA: THE ARTIST'S DAUGHTER 1972

Plaster and wood 31 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 11
Lent by the artist

PORTRAIT OF HENRY 1973

Plaster 40 x 18 x 11
Collection of Henry Geldzahler

ANDY WARHOL

MAO TSE TUNG 1972

GREEN FACE, PINK SHIRT,
BLUE BACKGROUND
Silkscreen on paper 36 x 36
Courtesy of Castelli Graphics

MAO TSE TUNG 1972

ORANGE FACE, GREEN SHIRT,
PINK BACKGROUND
Silkscreen on paper 36 x 36
Courtesy of Castelli Graphics

MAO TSE TUNG 1972

WHITE FACE, PINK SHIRT,
GREEN BACKGROUND
Silkscreen on paper 36 x 36
Courtesy of Castelli Graphics

IVAN KARP 1974

Silkscreen on canvas 36 x 36
Collection of Ivan Karp

This exhibition has been organized by Ruth Cummings, Boston University; Hillary Johnson, Cornell University; Michael Leja, Swarthmore College; and Charles Wright, Princeton University, students in the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program.

The Downtown Branch Museum is operated under the direction of David Hupert, Head of the Whitney Museum's Education Department. The administrative coordinator is Toba Tucker. The participants in the Independent Study Program this semester, in addition to the above, are: Catherine Coleman, New College-Hofstra University; Janet Kardon, University of Pennsylvania; Linda Kent, University of California at Los Angeles; Robert Lamb, City University of New York; Abigail Turner, Sarah Lawrence College; and Faythe Weaver, Ohio State University.

The Downtown Branch of the Whitney Museum of American Art, located in the Uris Building at 55 Water Street, is supported by the business community of lower Manhattan. The Independent Study Program is supported by the Helena Rubinstein Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. The Museum is open 11-3 Monday through Friday. Admission is free.

**DOWNTOWN BRANCH
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